

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY

**CAPSIZING OF LADY D
DCA 04 MM 015**

INTERVIEW OF LUIS NAZARRO

Baltimore, Maryland

Wednesday, March 31, 2004

APPEARANCES:

On behalf of the National Transportation
Safety Board:

MARIETTE M. BURER

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 8:15 a.m.

3 MS. BURER: Today is Wednesday, the 31st of
4 March. It's quarter after eight.

5 My name is Mariette with the National
6 Transportation Safety Board. And to my left is?

7 MR. NAZARRO: Yes, my name is Staff Sergeant
8 Luis Nazarro from the Puerto Rico National Guard.

9 MS. BURER: Okay. And to my right?

10 MR. BLAKELY: Yes, good morning. My name is
11 David Blakely.

12 MS. BURER: Okay. We're going to go ahead
13 and talk about the accident that happened over at the
14 Inner Harbor March 6th, and why don't you go ahead and
15 take us from the very beginning.

16 MR. NAZARRO: Well, as I recall, we were the
17 last people who got in the boat that day. Soon after
18 that, we were going to the -- to the other side of the
19 Harbor. And we heard that, after some two, three
20 minutes, the wind started blowing really fast. And we
21 -- the first mate tried to -- to put all the people on
22 the side where the -- where the wind was really strong,
23 trying to make some balance.

24 He told us about the life jackets, but after
25 that, it was really fast. The boat just tipped over,

1 and everybody was -- was screaming. There were some
2 (inaudible) over there. And the water started getting
3 inside the boat.

4 We saw -- were just trying to get out of the
5 door, from the boat to the door. But finally, we -- we
6 were able to open one window. The water already was
7 really high inside the boat.

8 The last thing I recall was that the water
9 was really dark. You can't -- you can see nothing.
10 But in my case, I just used my hands and I finally
11 found the open window.

12 And ships -- finally, I make it to the -- to
13 the -- I made it out, and climbed over the boat and
14 then started to help other people to get on -- on the
15 boat. Some of them were in really very bad condition.

16 And we were able to -- to help them because I doubted
17 that they can do it by their -- by themselves.

18 And as I can recall, after maybe 15 minutes
19 more or less, maybe 20, the -- I saw the Navy -- the
20 Navy boat arriving, you know, to us. Some of them
21 jumped right away on the -- jumped in the water, trying
22 to find somebody else, but they can't. The water was
23 so dark that they can't see nothing.

24 Then, we tried -- they throwed us a rope and
25 we tied the rope to the rudder and helped other people

1 to get from the -- from the pontoon boat to the -- to
2 the Navy boat.

3 And as I can recall, that -- that's the
4 details I can -- I can tell you.

5 MS. BURER: Okay. Do you recall what your
6 first impression was -- you were at Fort McHenry to
7 depart, right?

8 MR. NAZARRO: Mm-hmm.

9 MS. BURER: Do you recall any passengers that
10 were left behind when you took off from the park?

11 MR. NAZARRO: No, no. I think we -- as I
12 told you, we were the last ones. And --

13 MS. BURER: Okay.

14 MR. NAZARRO: -- I can't recall that -- after
15 that, nobody was waiting for the boat.

16 MS. BURER: Okay. What was your impression -
17 - did you take the same boat on previous points --

18 MR. NAZARRO: Actually --

19 MS. BURER: -- to Fort McHenry, or was it a
20 different boat?

21 MR. NAZARRO: Well, we -- we took first a big
22 boat, but after that we had to change to a smaller one.

23 And I think it was the same boat involved in the
24 accident.

25 MS. BURER: Okay.

1 MR. NAZARRO: That boat was the one who took
2 to -- took us to -- to Fort McHenry. Yes, I think it
3 was the same boat.

4 MS. BURER: Okay. What was your impression
5 when you first -- when you were on the docks at pier
6 and then boarding the boat? Did you have any kind of
7 impression?

8 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I just noticed some dark
9 clouds over the city, but no --

10 MS. BURER: Okay.

11 MR. NAZARRO: -- more than that, you know.
12 At that moment, even the -- the -- you know, I thought
13 the water was in good condition because I don't recall
14 strong winds when we got inside the boat. That was
15 later.

16 MS. BURER: Do you recall about what time it
17 was when you boarded?

18 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I'm not sure, but I think
19 more or less four --

20 MS. BURER: Okay.

21 MR. NAZARRO: -- in the afternoon.

22 MS. BURER: Okay. When you departed from the
23 pier, how much longer was it until you noticed that the
24 wind was picking up and --

25 MR. NAZARRO: Well --

1 MS. BURER: Can you recall where you were as
2 far as in the water?

3 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I can't recall that. We
4 were more or less in -- in between the two shores,
5 almost in the middle of the -- of the bay.

6 MS. BURER: Okay. Now, do you recall as far
7 as the windows and the doors inside the pontoon, were
8 they open or were they closed? Do you recall any of
9 that?

10 MR. NAZARRO: Well, yes. I think they were
11 closed.

12 MS. BURER: They were all closed?

13 MR. NAZARRO: Yes.

14 MS. BURER: Okay. And you mentioned
15 something about water inside the boat. Can you
16 elaborate a little bit more about that?

17 MR. NAZARRO: Well, what -- what I was trying
18 to say was, as soon as the boat tipped over -- well, I
19 don't know from where, but I think it maybe is between
20 the windows. Some of the water started right there to
21 get in the boat. It was really, really fast.

22 MS. BURER: Okay. But you didn't notice any
23 water prior to tilting over?

24 MR. NAZARRO: No, I -- I don't recall
25 previous amount of water inside, no.

1 MS. BURER: Okay.

2 MR. NAZARRO: No.

3 MS. BURER: Do you recall what side you
4 tilted over?

5 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I think we tilt over to
6 the side where the -- where the captain is.

7 MS. BURER: Okay.

8 MR. NAZARRO: And I remember when we -- we
9 went that side, everybody in the other side where we
10 were, just fall on top of the other people on the other
11 side. And that's it. I just remember the water
12 getting in the boat. That's it.

13 MS. BURER: Okay. When you were able to
14 climb on top of the other boat, prior to climbing on
15 top of the boat --

16 MR. NAZARRO: Mm-hmm.

17 MS. BURER: -- the capsized boat --

18 MR. NAZARRO: Yes.

19 MS. BURER: -- do you recall how many victims
20 or passengers were already on top of the boat, or were
21 you one of the first ones?

22 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I'm not sure, but I think
23 I recall some -- maybe one or two people on top of the
24 boat, because as soon as we -- we climbed on, we just
25 bent over and tried to help the other passengers.

1 MS. BURER: Okay.

2 MR. NAZARRO: But I think I recall some.
3 Maybe one or two more people on top.

4 MS. BURER: Okay. The window that you went
5 through --

6 MR. NAZARRO: Mm-hmm.

7 MS. BURER: -- do you recall -- can you
8 recall if it was the front windows or the back or --

9 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I think it was some
10 window in that same side, the side where the captain
11 is.

12 MS. BURER: Okay.

13 MR. NAZARRO: I think it was maybe in the
14 middle of the boat. I'm not sure.

15 MS. BURER: When you went through the window,
16 in what condition was the window, do you recall? Did
17 you have to slide it open or was it already opened and
18 it felt --

19 MR. NAZARRO: No, I don't recall because,
20 like I told you, I just used my hands.

21 MS. BURER: Yeah.

22 MR. NAZARRO: And it was completely dark.

23 MS. BURER: Okay.

24 MR. NAZARRO: It was completely dark.

25 MS. BURER: Do you recall how many other

1 people you helped getting on top of the capsized
2 pontoon?

3 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I -- I just recall some,
4 particularly the first mate. We helped one -- one
5 lady. I don't recall exactly how was she, but I recall
6 that.

7 We helped some other people, I think, but the
8 other -- the other passengers were, you know, able to,
9 you know, try to -- to climb by themselves. But we
10 helped them, but those two I -- I -- I recall that I --
11 I have to pull them from the water and put them on top
12 of the boat.

13 MS. BURER: Okay. Do you remember the
14 condition of the first mate?

15 MR. NAZARRO: Yes, yes. He was -- he was
16 like -- like -- he was bad. We have to give him some
17 CPR, and then he -- he started breathing. But he was
18 in bad condition when we pulled him out.

19 MS. BURER: Okay. Do you recall if anyone
20 was wearing any kind of life jackets by the time that
21 they got on top of the capsized boat? Do you recall
22 any (inaudible)?

23 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I think I recall some
24 life jackets, but they were floating on the water.

25 MS. BURER: Okay. Do you recall any kind of

1 radio conversations or communications with either the
2 mate or the captain prior to capsizing? Whether it's
3 at the Fort McHenry or at boarding or once along the
4 way.

5 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I think once along the
6 way. I recall one time seeing the captain reaching
7 some kind of information through the radio, but maybe
8 one minute after that that the -- the -- the wind
9 started to blow really fast and turned the boat over.

10 MS. BURER: What was your impression of the
11 captain and the mate's demeanor during the voyage or
12 the trip?

13 MR. NAZARRO: Well, my impression was they --
14 they were doing their normal jobs, and for me, they
15 were doing the job right.

16 MS. BURER: Okay. And refresh my memory.
17 Did you get or receive any safety debriefing from Fort
18 McHenry?

19 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I recall receiving some
20 information, but like I told you, when we get in the
21 boats at the beginning of the return trip, that was
22 really fast. We just get inside in -- in the boat
23 right away and started to -- to copy the mate. But
24 yes, I recall at some point receiving information about
25 the -- where the life jackets were, but I don't recall

1 if it was at the beginning of the trip, right away in
2 the -- in the main port, or at the -- at the beginning
3 of the returning trip.

4 MS. BURER: Okay. Do you recall where the
5 life jackets were on the pontoon?

6 MR. NAZARRO: Yes. They were under the
7 seats.

8 MS. BURER: Okay. Okay. Okay. I don't have
9 any further questions. Could you just acknowledge that
10 this conversation has been taped? And then what I'll
11 do is ask you more of the personal questions, like your
12 address and date of birth and that kind of thing.

13 MR. NAZARRO: Okay.

14 MS. BURER: Just acknowledge that this
15 conversation has been recorded.

16 MR. NAZARRO: Well, I -- I'm -- I know that
17 this conversation has been taped, and I explained my
18 experience of my free will. I want to -- to help in
19 whatever I can in the investigation. Thank you.

20 MS. BURER: Thank you.

21 (End of recording)

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